



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DEAD BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

***San Diego is the last Southern California County to detect West Nile Virus.***

San Diego County Vector Control officials announced today that West Nile virus has been detected in the County for the first time this season after the virus was confirmed in a dead Cooper's hawk found in Carlsbad.

"We have mobilized our staff into the area to treat known mosquito breeding sites. Controlling mosquito breeding and eliminating backyard-breeding sites is key to preventing the spread of the virus," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health.

The County has been aggressively treating 25 known mosquito-breeding sites with monthly aerial larvicide applications.

Last October and November five dead birds and one horse were found with West Nile virus in San Diego County and officials are expecting the first local human case of the virus sometime this year.

Residents are urged to eliminate all standing water sources on their property, including children's toys and plant saucers, because mosquitoes can breed in a small amount of water. Permanent water features such as horse troughs or unused swimming pools should be stocked with mosquito fish, which are available free of charge at 11 distribution sites located throughout the County.

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease. Mosquitoes that feed on infected birds become carriers and can pass on the virus. Birds that have been dead for less than 24 hours, are intact, and are not covered with ants or flies should be reported to Vector Control at 888-551-INFO.

Most people infected with West Nile Virus have no symptoms, although a few will develop fever, skin rashes, headaches and body aches. People over 50 years of age and individuals with compromised immune systems are at risk of developing more serious symptoms, such as meningitis or encephalitis.

Residents can protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, and staying indoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk. They should use an insect repellent containing DEET on exposed skin and clothing. For more information about the West Nile Virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site at [www.SDFighttheBite.com](http://www.SDFighttheBite.com).

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